

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

**THE SECRETARY-GENERAL**

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**REMARKS ON SYRIA**

**G20 ST. PETERSBURG LEADERS SUMMIT**

**St.Petersburg, 5 September 2013**

**Mr. President,  
Excellencies,**

**I am very grateful to President Putin for allowing me to briefly address you about the tragic conflict in Syria, and some of the more recent developments.**

**You are well aware of events following the horrendous attack in the Ghouta area of Damascus on 21 August.**

**Subsequently I received a request from more than 45 countries to investigate the incidents. I therefore asked a team of UN inspectors, who were already on the ground, to focus on that incident as its highest priority.**

**In the course of its fact-finding activities, from 26 to 30 August, the team visited various affected areas, as well as hospitals where victims are being treated.**

**They interviewed witnesses, and collected environmental and bio-medical samples.**

**On 31 August, the UN team returned to The Hague to immediately begin its analysis. The whole process prior to getting the evidence to the laboratories was overseen by 2 Syrian officials, in order to ensure full transparency, based on the guidelines of the General Assembly.**

**All samples have now arrived at four designated laboratories in Europe for analysis. Scientists are working around the clock to ensure a rapid result but one that also meets the highest professional standards and without compromising its integrity.**

**After the team informs me of the outcome, I will report promptly the results of that investigation to the Security Council and all Member States.**

**I am particularly grateful to the team of inspectors for its professionalism and indeed bravery. I also wish to thank the Organization for the Prevention of Chemical Weapons and the World Health Organization for their support to the work of the team, as well as those Governments that provided evidence and complimentary information. I also appreciate the cooperation of the Government of Syria in this regard.**

**I take very seriously my responsibility as Secretary-General to make sure that the United Nations is doing everything it can to uphold the universal prohibition on the use of chemical weapons. This is a larger issue than the conflict in Syria. It is about a collective responsibility to mankind.**

**Thus, I have repeatedly stressed that any use of chemical weapons by anyone under any circumstance would be a serious violation of international law and an outrageous crime. We cannot allow impunity in any crime against humanity.**



**I believe that the topic of chemical weapons is critically important for international peace and security, and I take note of the ongoing debate over what course of action should be taken by the international community. All those actions should be taken within the framework of the UN Charter, as a matter of principle.**

*Excellencies,*

**Syria's humanitarian needs are unfortunately outpacing all our efforts. The statistics are terrible and tragic. Over 100,000 people have died.**

**4.25 million people have been displaced within the country, and at least another 2 million are now refugees.**

**I am extremely grateful for all the humanitarian assistance provided so generously to the Syrian people.**

**Yet I continue to urgently ask for additional funding for our humanitarian operations because of the constant needs.**

**We have launched new funding appeals to respond to the humanitarian and refugee situations and are asking for ~~nearly~~ \$4.4 billion.**

**[All of these appeals have been funded at around 40%.]**



**Let me also mention the toll this humanitarian crisis is taking on neighbouring countries such as Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, Turkey as well as in North Africa. All have been generous in hosting Syrian refugees. These countries must be helped.**

**The terrible, desperate plight of the people of Syria leads me to reiterate yet again that it is imperative to end this war. Thus, I am determined to renew our efforts to rapidly convene the Geneva conference for Syria as soon as possible.**

**I have invited Joint Special Representative Lakhdar Brahimi to join me here in Saint Petersburg so we can intensify our efforts towards a return to the negotiating table. Let us remember: every day that we lose is a day when scores of innocent civilians die. Providing more arms to either side is not the answer. There is no military solution.**

**A viable political outcome in Syria must see the full implementation of the Geneva Communiqué. It must also address the aspiration of the Syrian people for a new, democratic Syria.**

*members*

I sincerely hope that all the distinguished leaders of the  
Permanent Five as well as some non-permanent members of  
the Security Council present here today will discharge their  
responsibilities fully and for the sake of the people of Syria.

*moral, political*

Thank you.